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Russian Federation*

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I. General information

1. The Russian Federation is a country located in the eastern part of Europe and the northern part of Asia, with a total area of 17.12 million square kilometres, and it shares its borders with the following States: Finland, Norway, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Belarus, Ukraine, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, China, Mongolia, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan and the United States of America.

2. Its climate ranges from maritime in the Far North-West to markedly continental in Siberia and monsoonal in the Far East. Its topographical areas are Arctic desert, tundra, wooded tundra, wooded steppe, steppe and semi-desert.

3. The current federal structure of the Russian Federation is enshrined in the Constitution of the Russian Federation. The constituent entities of the Federation are the republics, territories, provinces, federal cities, an autonomous province and autonomous areas.

4. Currently, the Russian Federation is made up of 85 constituent entities, including 22 republics, 9 territories, 46 provinces, 3 federal cities, 1 autonomous province and 4 autonomous regions.

5. Pursuant to Decree No. 849 of 13 May 2000 of the President of the Russian Federation, on the plenipotentiary representatives of the President of the Russian Federation in federal districts, the category of federal district was established. Currently, there are eight such federal districts in the Russian Federation, and these are not constituent entities of the Federation nor do they form any constituent part of any of its administrative or territorial divisions. The plenipotentiary representatives of the President of the Russian Federation in the federal districts have no constitutional powers — they are representatives of the President of the Russian Federation and are members of the Office of the President of the Russian Federation.

6. The population of the Russian Federation at 1 January 2017 was 146.8 million. Of that population, 74.27 per cent was urban. As at 1 January 2016, 169 cities had populations of over 100,000. Of those, 15 had populations of more than 1 million.

7. The population density is 8.57 inhabitants per square kilometre, ranging from 27 inhabitants per square kilometre in the European part of the Russian Federation to 3 inhabitants per square kilometre in the Asian part. Among the constituent entities of the Federation, the highest population density is that recorded in Moscow, at more than 4,626 persons per square kilometre, and the lowest in the Chukotka autonomous area, at less than 0.07 inhabitants per square kilometre.

8. As part of the road map for the demographic policy of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025, approved by Decree No. 1351 of the President of the Russian Federation of 9 October 2007, a range of measures are being implemented to create conditions to support population growth, to raise the quality of life and to increase life expectancy.

9. In 2016, the absolute number of births increased by 80.7 per cent (over that of 2006), reaching 1,888,700. The total fertility rate rose one third, from 1.3 in 2006 to 1.78 in 2016. The number of deaths fell by 25 per cent, from 2,166,700 in 2006 to 1,819,000. The infant mortality rate is 6.0 per 1,000 births (down from 10.2 in 2006). The maternal mortality rate is 10.0 per 100,000 births (compared to 23.7 in 2006). Life expectancy has risen to 72.1, an increase of 5.41 years since 2006, with that of men increasing by 6.57 years and that of women by 3.96 years. Natural population decline measured 11,700 in 2016, compared to 687,000 in 2006.

10. Where the age structure of the population is concerned, in the Russian Federation there are 31.7 million children under 18, constituting 21.7 per cent of the total population of the country. The working age population (males between 16 and 59 years old and women between 16 and 54 years old) makes up 57.5 per cent of the total and citizens of pensionable age constitute 24.6 per cent.

11. With regard to the ethnic make-up of the population, according to figures from the 2010 national population census, the population of the Russian Federation is made up of

representatives of 193 peoples and ethnic groups speaking 277 languages and dialects. The majority are Russians — 111.02 million persons, or some 80 per cent of all the country's inhabitants. The other ethnic groups with populations of over 1 million include: Tatars — 5.3 million (3.87 per cent); Ukrainians — 1.9 million (1.4 per cent); Bashkirs — 1.6 million (1.15 per cent); Chuvash — 1.4 million (1.05 per cent); and Armenians — 1.2 million (0.86 per cent).

12. In all 47 ethnic groups, none of which has a population in excess of 50,000, enjoy the special legal status of small indigenous minorities of the Russian Federation. Under the Constitution of the Russian Federation and Russian law, these peoples enjoy the special protection of the State, which takes the form of the promotion of their social, economic and ethnocultural development, their access to natural resources and the granting to them of certain economic and social benefits.

13. Over the period between the two national censuses (2002 and 2010), the total population of these small indigenous minorities grew from 306,400 to 316,010 — or by 3.12 per cent, while the population of the small indigenous minorities of the North, Siberia and the Russian Far East increased from 244,000 to 257,900, or by 5.7 per cent.

14. Where the religious composition of the population is concerned, the Russian Federation is a secular State. A large number of different religions are practised in the Russian Federation (over 60), the most widespread of which are Christianity (for the most part, of the Orthodox variety, which is adhered to by some 75 per cent of the country's population), Islam, Judaism and Buddhism.

15. All religious associations are separate from the State and equal before the law. Federal Act No. 125 of 26 September 1997, on freedom of conscience and religious associations, regulates legal matters relating to the exercise of the human and civil rights to freedom of conscience and freedom of religion, the legal status of religious associations and particular aspects of their civil status.

16. As of 2016, 29,000 religious organizations were registered in the Russian Federation.

17. With regard to the educational status of the population, in the Russian Federation, there are 27.9 million people with higher vocational education, 5.4 million with incomplete higher education and 7.1 million with secondary vocational education. The numbers of those with secondary, basic and primary education are, respectively, 21.8 million, 13.0 million and 6.4 million.

18. Among professionals with higher vocational education, 707,000 have postgraduate qualifications.

19. There are 596,000 holders of PhD degrees and 124,000 doctors of science in the Russian Federation. Of the PhD holders, 265,000 are women (44 per cent), as are 41,000 of the doctors of science (33 per cent). Where age is concerned, people of working age predominate among the PhD holders (65 per cent), while 51 per cent of the doctors of science are above working age.

20. The total number of persons with incomplete higher education has grown (by 44 per cent), with 68 per cent of them continuing their studies.

21. As at 1 January 2017, there were 7.34 million children attending independent preschool establishments. At the beginning of the 2016/17 school year, there were 42,620 day-time State educational establishments operating in the Russian Federation, with a total number of 15.2 million pupils, 18,000 of which were situated in towns and cities and 24,610 in villages and the countryside.

22. In 2016, there were 3,520 educational establishments in the Russian Federation offering secondary vocational programmes, with a total enrolment of 3,409,200 students. Of these, 1,740 provide training courses for qualified manual workers and office workers, with a total enrolment of 556,000 students.

23. In all, there are 34 tertiary educational institutions providing training courses for manual and office workers in the Russian Federation, with a total enrolment of 6,610 students.

24. A total of 1.58 million students are enrolled in State vocational educational establishments, 326,390 of them on full scholarships. In all, a total of 89,700 students are attending courses at private vocational institutions.

25. At the beginning of the 2016/17 school year, there were 817 tertiary educational institutions (441 of them State and 366 private) operating in the Russian Federation, with a further 1,080 subsidiary branches (727 State and 352 private), with a total of 4,379,000 students. Women constituted 52 per cent of the total number of students. There are some 24,000 senior staff members at these establishments, 53 per cent of them women. The teaching staff totals 279,800 persons, 57 of whom are women.

26. General secondary education is provided free of charge in the Russian Federation, with the option of tuition in the students' mother tongue, and the study of their languages as separate subjects.

27. In all, 74 different languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation, including 22 languages of small indigenous minorities, are taught as separate subjects.

28. The entire syllabus is taught in the medium of 24 different languages of the Russian Federation.

29. According to figures from the 2010 national census, 98 per cent of the members of small indigenous minorities of the Russian Federation aged 15 and over are enrolled in general education, 40 per cent attending vocational courses, including 12 per cent with higher education and 0.3 per cent at postgraduate level. Only 2 per cent of the members of such indigenous minorities have no primary education.

30. Gross domestic product (GDP) was included as an economic indicator in the Russian Federation in 1989. In 1990, the country's GDP measured 644 billion roubles. In 2016, the GDP had risen to 85,880.6 billion roubles. The GDP deflator index for 2016 relative to 2015 values measured 103.4 per cent.

31. In 2016, the decline in gross added value slowed. In the construction sector it measured 4.3 per cent (compared to 4.9 per cent in 2015) and in wholesale and retail trade, 3.6 per cent (8.1 per cent in 2015). In agriculture, the index has risen by 3.5 per cent (compared to 3.0 per cent in 2015). In 2016, gross added value in the manufacturing industries grew by 1.4 per cent (in 2015 it dropped by 4.1 per cent); in mining, by 0.2 per cent (compared to 0.4 per cent in 2015); and in the production and distribution of electricity, gas and water, by 2.4 per cent (having dropped by 1.2 per cent in 2015).

32. The percentage of expenditure on final consumption as a proportion of GDP measured 70.7 per cent (compared to 69.7 per cent in 2015), 52 per cent of that figure constituted by household expenditure (51.9 per cent in 2015), and 18.4 per cent by government agency spending (17.5 per cent in 2015).

33. The proportion of GDP constituted by gross capital formation grew from 22.3 per cent in 2015 to 24.2 per cent in 2016, including an increase from 21.5 to 20.7 per cent in gross fixed capital formation. Working capital stock rose from 1.6 per cent in 2015 to 2.7 per cent in 2016. Over the same period, the share of net exports (exports minus imports) declined from 8 to 5.1 per cent.

34. In December 2016, the consumer price index, as computed by the Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat), was 0.4 per cent and, from the beginning of the year, 5.4 per cent (compared to 0.8 per cent for December 2015 and 12.9 per cent from the beginning of the year). In late December, the cost of the minimum food basket, based on the monthly average for the country as a whole, was 3,701.9 roubles, representing an increase of 0.9 per cent from the previous month, and 3.5 per cent from the beginning of the year.

35. Where employment, social support and protection are concerned, at the end of 2016, the country's economically active population numbered 76.0 million. The unemployment rate measured 5.5 per cent (compared to 7.1 per cent in 2006). The average per capita income in monetary terms was 30,700 roubles (compared to 10,150 roubles in 2006). As at April 2017, 911,300 people were registered as unemployed (compared to 999,300 in 2016), 800,000 of whom are receiving benefits. Women make up 47.3 per cent of the unemployed, while 18.7 of the unemployed are young persons up to the age of 25.

36. In the Russian Federation, citizens have the right to free secondary education, free education in tertiary institutions on a competitive basis, free medical care covering the full range of basic services, State pensions, benefits and other forms of social protection. Social welfare arrangements are in place for specific socially vulnerable population groups (persons with disabilities, veterans, single parents with children, families with many children, orphans and others). Parents or persons caring for a child are also accorded the right to take leave to care for their child up to the age of 3. A number of other measures are also in place to support families with two or more children (granting of special certificates entitling the holder to maternal (or family) allowances — referred to as "maternal capital").

Brief historical overview

37. Over the period from the second to the fourth centuries A.D., the Great Migration resulted in the resettlement of the Slavonic tribes in eastern Europe, where they started to cultivate the land that they had occupied and to interact with the neighbouring Balts, Finno-Ugrians, Goths, Huns and other nomadic tribes. In the sixth century, the Eastern Slavonic branch (the future Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian peoples) split off from the common Slavonic stock. Individual early Slavonic States had been formed by the ninth century.

38. A unified early Russian nation came into existence in the ninth to eleventh centuries, in Kievan Rus.

39. Kievan Rus was constituted as a State in the year 882. In 988, Orthodox Christianity was adopted as the State religion. By the time of its adoption of Christianity, Kievan Rus already had its own alphabet. In the second half of the ninth century, Saints Cyril and Methodius had devised the Glagolithic alphabet, which in due course was reworked by them with the use of Greek letters into what became known as the "Cyrillic" alphabet. On the initiative of Yaroslav the Wise, a legal code was drawn up, known as the "Russkaya Pravda" ("Russian Truth"), which represented the primary source of Russian law in that era.

40. The period from the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries was a time of feudal fragmentation for Rus, with its division into separate lands; the struggle against nomadic tribes, the Tatars and Mongols and the Lithuanian Order; and the emergence of Muscovy, or the Grand Duchy of Moscow, the centre for the unification of the Russian lands.

41. The years 1380-1500 witnessed the unification of lands that had been Russian from time immemorial — those of North-East and North-West Rus — as a centralized State, which in 1480 was liberated from the Golden Horde, under the Tatar Yoke. The period from the late fifteenth to early seventeenth centuries saw the full emergence of a centralized State, Europe's largest power, which from the end of the fifteenth century became known as Russia.

42. During the years 1500-1800 a multi-ethnic State centred on Moscow was formed, stretching from the Baltic to the Pacific Ocean and incorporating the peoples of the Volga region, the Urals and Siberia. The population of Russia at the end of the sixteenth century numbered some 9 million. By the end of the reign of Ivan IV, the country's area had increased more than tenfold. Its largest city was Moscow, whose population then was in the region of 100,000. Upon his accession to the throne in 1547, Ivan IV, Grand Duke of Moscow, took the title of Tsar. During the period when the centralized State was coming into existence, the role of the country's legislative and deliberative body was performed by a council of members of the nobility, known as the Boyars' Duma. The Zemsky Sobor — or Land Assembly — was established and reforms carried out, with the creation of a permanent army. Particularly important events for the strengthening of Russian statehood were the armed incursions by Polish-Lithuanian and Swedish forces (in the early seventeenth century), and the unification of the Russian people under the leadership of Kuzma Minin and Prince Dmitry Pozharsky. In 1613, Mikhail Romanov was elected as tsar by the Zemsky Sobor, becoming the first representative of the Romanov dynasty. In 1649, the Assembly Code ("Sobornoe Ulozhenie") was adopted, providing, among other measures, for the introduction of serfdom. In 1654, Little Russia — or Malorossiya (the territories of present-day Ukraine on the left bank of the Dnieper) — was reunified with Russia. In 1667, a peasant uprising was led by Stenka Razin in protest against the introduction of serfdom and increases in conscription duties and taxes.

43. Milestones in Russian history of that time include the extension of the Russian State to the Baltic Sea as a result of the Northern War of 1700-1721; the proclamation in 1721 of Peter I as Emperor of All the ; the accelerated development of the country in an era of reform; the establishment of the Senate and the 11 so-called colleges (or ministries); the establishment of the regular army and navy; the determination of the country's government and territorial administrative system; the rule of Catherine II; and the emergence of enlightened despotism. Over the years 1773-1775, the country was racked by the peasant uprising led by Emilian Pugachev in response to the curtailment of the privileges and liberties of the Cossacks. Victories were achieved in Russo-Turkish wars of 1768-1774 and 1787-1791. By the end of the eighteenth century the country's borders had expanded to include the northern Black Sea region, the Azov Sea region, the Crimea, the right-bank Cossack hetmanate (the south-western part of modern-day Ukraine), the land between the Dniester and Bug rivers, Byelorussia, Courland and Lithuania. The autonomy of Moldavia and Wallachia, which had been subjugated by Russia, was restored. Work started on the development of so-called New Russia ("Novorossiya"); the cities of Ekaterinoslav (1776, now Dnipropetrovsk), and Kherson (1778) were built. Sebastopol was founded, as the base for the Russian fleet (1783). In 1783 a protectorate agreement was struck in the city of Georgievsk between the Georgian tsar Irakli II and Russia. The Treaty of Georgievsk was signed, according Eastern Georgia the status of a protectorate of Russia. In the mid-eighteenth century the population of Russia totalled 18 million and, by the end of the century, 36 million.

1800-1917

44. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the Russian empire was divided up into governorates and provinces, which in turn were divided into districts. During the first half of the century, the number of such governorates increased by 150 per cent through the annexation to Russia of new territories, the breaking up of existing governorates and the upgrading of certain provinces (such as Astrakhan and Taurida) into autonomous governorates. Some of the governorates were amalgamated into governorates-general and vice-regencies (Caucasus). The Grand Duchy of Finland was annexed by Russia in 1809 and enjoyed special status, as did the Kingdom of Poland, which was formed in 1815 from some of the Polish territories.

45. This period was marked by the effects of the Napoleonic invasion of 1812 and the foreign expeditions by the Russian army of 1813-1814 to liberate the peoples of Europe from French domination and to overthrow the forces of Napoleon. A union was concluded with Prussia, which was joined by Austria, England and Sweden.

46. The second phase of the annexation of the Caucasus by Russia was concluded with the Russo-Turkish and Russo-Persian wars of the late 1820s. Georgia, Eastern Armenia and Northern Azerbaijan all became part of the Russian empire.

47. The 1825 Decembrist uprising in St. Petersburg marked the beginning of the Russian revolutionary movement. Defeat in the Crimean war (1853-1856) and the lacklustre approach to land reform and the abolition of serfdom (1861) had the effect of inflaming the population.

48. By the early twentieth century the area of the Russian Empire had grown to 22.2 million square kilometres, the second largest in the world, after the British Empire. Between the end of the nineteenth century and 1913, its population had expanded by almost one third, to some 166 million people of various nationalities. In 1897, Russia carried out its first ever population census.

49. In the early twentieth century social conflicts and the Government's inability to address critical political problems led to an acute social and political crisis. This manifested itself in heightened clashes between workers and the tsarist authorities, the formation of radical left-leaning political parties and liberal opposition alliances, the emergence of conflicts within the upper echelons of power and deviations in the Government's political course.

50. The bourgeois-democratic revolution took place in 1905-1907. This led to a new system of political organization of the State, known as the "June 3 monarchy".

51. The worsening of the country's internal political situation as a consequence of the First World War led to the curtailment of its democratic institutions (in particular, the State Duma was dissolved), inspiring the liberal populists to action, fuelling the spread of Marxism and, as a result, causing the overthrow of autocracy in February 1917. The victory of the revolution did not stop the country's crisis from worsening, however. In October 1917, against the backdrop of the continued worsening of the economic situation in the country, general havoc, starvation and poverty, another revolution erupted, which brought to power the Bolshevist party, led by Vladimir Lenin.

1917-1991

52. On 25 October (7 November in the Gregorian calendar) 1917, the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) was formed. In January 1918, the Third Russian National Congress of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies approved the Declaration of the Right of Workers and the Exploited People, ratified the draft law on the socialization of land (nationalization of private holdings), and promulgated the federalist principle of the State government (RSFSR). On 10 July 1918, the Fifth Congress of Soviets approved the first Constitution of the RSFSR.

53. In 1918, universal suffrage was introduced, including equal rights for women and free schooling. In 1919, compulsory literacy programmes were launched (until 1917, more than half the population of Russia was illiterate), together with the electrification of the country.

54. The growth of the new State and efforts to ensure the equal rights and opportunities of all citizens were significantly impeded by the civil war which broke out in 1918, and compounded by the foreign intervention by the allied members of the Entente. The civil war ended in 1922 with victory for the Bolsheviks, creating conditions for the incorporation of the Soviet republics around the RSFSR, which on 30 December 1922 together formed a new unified State — the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). In January 1924, the Constitution of the USSR was approved. A form of government was proclaimed, consisting in a federation of republics with the right of free withdrawal from the Union and the right to deal independently with issues of domestic policy, justice, education, health and social security.

55. Following the death of Vladimir Lenin in 1924, leadership of the country was assumed by Joseph Stalin. In the second half of the 1920s, the main development challenges facing the country were its transformation from an agrarian to an industrial economy, ensuring its economic independence and the strengthening of its defensive capacity. On 5 December 1936, the Eighth Extraordinary Congress of Soviets approved the new Constitution of the USSR and the Soviet Union was proclaimed a socialist State. The Constitution reflected changes in the country's State structure, with the emergence of new Union and autonomous republics and regions. The Constitution also enshrined in law the conduct of universal, secret, equal and direct elections to the country's organs of government — the soviets — at all levels. Citizens of the USSR were guaranteed the rights to work, recreation, education and material security in old age. Freedom of religious worship was promulgated. Keen attention was paid to upholding the rights of the different peoples of the USSR. Thus, by the mid 1930s, scripts were devised for dozens of nationalities whose languages had no written form. In parallel to the significant advances achieved in social and economic spheres, however, this period was also marred by widespread violations of the rule of law, along with the emergence of the personality cult surrounding Joseph Stalin.

56. On 22 June 1941, Nazi Germany attacked the USSR. Key factors in the victory by the USSR in the Second World War were its skilled conduct of the military operations, the rapid restructuring of its military industries, the tenacious resistance of the Red Army, the massive patriotic upsurge of the entire population and the partisan movement. The outstanding landmarks of the war were the battle for Moscow, the battles of Stalingrad and Kursk, the breaking of the siege of Leningrad, and liberation of the peoples of Europe by the Red Army. The USSR made the greatest contribution to the final victory and suffered the heaviest losses. The war inflicted massive casualties: some 27 million people died fighting for their homeland and in fascist captivity, or succumbed to starvation and disease. Hostilities across the entire country devastated its agriculture: the USSR lost some 30 per cent of its national wealth. Its victory in the Great Patriotic War greatly enhanced the standing of the USSR: in 1945 it had

diplomatic relations with 52 States, as compared to 26 before the war. The Soviet Union participated actively in efforts to tackle critical international issues and, above all, in resolving the post-war situation in Europe.

57. The years from 1953 to 1964 have gone down in history as the period of the Khrushchev thaw. Liberalization processes were launched in both domestic and foreign policy, together with the rehabilitation of repressed citizens and peoples. Reforms were carried out in both economic and political domains. The first sputnik was launched, followed by the first person to fly into space, Yury Gagarin. Society underwent a cultural revival, free secondary, specialized secondary and higher education was introduced and the social welfare system was expanded.

58. The period of Leonid Brezhnev's administration was marked by transition to a more generally conservative political orientation. In 1977, at its extraordinary session, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR adopted a new constitution, following an extensive public debate.

59. In the mid-1980s, in response to an initiative by the Party leaders, a process was launched to upgrade the country's economic foundations and political system and the cultural life of its society. This new course was launched by Mikhail Gorbachev at the April 1985 plenary session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In March 1990, it was agreed to set aside article 6 of the Constitution of the USSR, on the leadership role of the Communist Party in society. By that stage numerous political organizations were already active in the country and a range of different approaches to preservation of the Union were under consideration. In December 1991, after the collapse of the August 1991 putsch, a meeting was convened in the Belavezha Forest (in the then Byelorussian SSR) between the heads of the three sovereign States — the RSFSR (Boris Yeltsin), the Ukrainian SSR (Leonid Kravchuk) and the Byelorussian SSR (Stanislav Shushkevich), which resulted in a statement denouncing the Union Treaty of 1922 and dissolving the organs of State of the Soviet Union. After proclaiming its sovereignty in the Declaration of State Sovereignty of 12 June 1990, the Russian Federation took its place as the successor of the USSR.

1992-2017

60. At the end of the 1980s, the country's system of government had comprised two levels of representative authority — the Congress of People's Deputies and the bicameral Supreme Council. President Yeltsin was elected by popular vote as the country's executive leader. The Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation was established and set in operation. The Government devised a programme of radical economic reforms, centred around measures to shift the economy to a market-based approach (known as "shock therapy" methods). The decision to liberalize the economy, the continued economic crisis in the country and the absence of any social guarantees caused frustration and anger among large numbers of the population.

61. This in turn led to the exacerbation of tensions between the legislative and executive branches of Government. On 21 September 1993, Yeltsin signed a decree on the dissolution of the Supreme Council and the Congress of People's Deputies and ordered elections to a new parliament in December of that year. Parliament declared this decree unconstitutional and stripped the President of his power. A two-week standoff set in, which erupted into wide-scale riots, the seizure of the City Hall and the storming of the Ostankino television centre. The President declared a state of emergency and called troops into Moscow, which shelled the Supreme Soviet headquarters.

62. On 12 December 1993 the Constitution of the Russian Federation was adopted by a popular vote. The Russian Federation was proclaimed as a democratic, federal State based on the rule of law, with a republican form of government. The President, elected in a secret ballot by universal, equal and direct suffrage, was declared the Head of State.

63. In 1994, former Soviet troops were withdrawn from Eastern Europe and the first operation was mounted to restore constitutional order in Chechnya. In 1995, the customs union of Belarus, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation was formed.

64. In 1999, President Yeltsin stepped down. Vladimir Putin stepped in as acting President of the Russian Federation and then took office following the March 2000 elections. Priority was given to the task of strengthening Russian statehood.

65. In this, the principal goals were settlement of the Chechen problem, the combating of terrorism and the provision of support to regional leaders who had rejected armed struggle and were calling for assistance in restoring their economies. Steps were taken to stabilize the situation of the civilian population in the northern Caucasus. In March 2003, a referendum was held on the unity of Chechnya and Russia and the Constitution of the Chechen Republic was adopted.

66. By the year 2000, on the whole the worst consequences of the economic crisis had been surmounted and the gradual recovery of the country's entire economic system had been set in motion. Over the period 2004-2007, the Russian Federation paid off, ahead of schedule, a large part of the external debt accumulated during the administrations of Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin. By 2008, the country's external debt had dropped to a level considered to be among the lowest in the world.

67. In 2004, Vladimir Putin was re-elected President; in 2008, Dmitry Medvedev was elected President; and in 2012, Putin was elected President.

68. In March 2014, a referendum was held in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and in Sevastopol on the status of Crimea: 96.77 per cent of the Crimean voters and 95.6 per cent of the voters of Sevastopol opted for reunification with the Russian Federation. Following that referendum, President Putin signed the treaty on the accession of Crimea and Sevastopol to the Russian Federation. The Federal Assembly ratified the treaty and adopted the constitutional act on the establishment of these new constituent entities of the Russian Federation.

69. In the matter of the constitutional system and its three pillars — the legislature, the executive and the judiciary — the Constitution of the Russian Federation stipulates, in its article 1, that the Russian Federation is a democratic federal State subject to the rule of law with a republican form of Government; in articles 7 and 14 that it is a social and secular State; and, in article 8, that it is a State the unity of whose economic area is guaranteed.

70. Human beings and their rights and freedoms are the supreme value. In article 2, the State is required to recognize, uphold and protect human and civil rights and freedoms.

71. Under article 3 of the Constitution, the multi-ethnic people of the Russian Federation are the bearers of its sovereignty and the sole repository of power in the Russian Federation.

72. The people exercise power both directly and also through State and local government bodies.

73. The referendum and free elections are the supreme direct manifestation of the power of the people.

74. Article 13 stipulates that pluralism is ensured in Russian society by the recognition of ideological and political diversity and the multiparty system and that no ideology may establish itself as the ideology of the State or as an obligatory ideology.

75. Article 5 of the Constitution establishes that the Russian Federation is composed of republics, territories, provinces, federal cities, one autonomous province and autonomous areas, which are equal constituent entities of the Federation.

76. Republics have their own constitutions and legislation. Territories, provinces, federal cities, autonomous provinces and autonomous areas have their own statutes and legislation.

77. The federalist structure of the Russian Federation is based on the principles of State integrity, a uniform system of State power, delimitation of the scope of jurisdiction and powers between the State authorities of the Russian Federation and the authorities of the constituent entities of the Federation, and the equality and self-determination of the peoples in the Russian Federation.

78. All constituent entities of the Russian Federation enjoy equal rights in their interactions with the federal authorities.

79. State power in the Russian Federation is exercised on the basis of its distribution between the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. The legislature, the executive and the judiciary are autonomous bodies (art. 10).

80. Article 11 of the Constitution provides that State power in the Russian Federation shall be administered by the President of the Russian Federation, the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation (comprising the Federation Council and the State Duma, its upper and lower houses), the Government of the Russian Federation, and the courts of the Russian Federation.

81. State power in the constituent entities of Federation is exercised by the public authorities constituted in those entities.

82. The delimitation of the scope of jurisdiction and power between the State authorities of the Russian Federation and the public authorities of its constituent entities is laid down by the Constitution, federal and other instruments on the delimitation of jurisdiction and authority, and also by federal law as a regulatory instrument directly governing any issues of joint jurisdiction and defining the rights and duties of all those involved in such legal relationships, including the public authorities.

83. Local self-government is both recognized and guaranteed in the Russian Federation. Local self-government is exercised autonomously within the scope of its jurisdiction. Local governments do not form part of the system of central State authority (art. 12).

84. Article 15 of the Constitution stipulates that the Constitution of the Russian Federation has supreme juridical authority, is directly applicable and is in effect throughout the territory of the Russian Federation. Laws and other legal statutes enacted in the Russian Federation may not be at variance with the Constitution.

85. Public authorities and local governments, officials, citizens and their associations must comply with the Constitution and laws of the Russian Federation.

86. Laws are subject to public promulgation. Laws that have not been promulgated shall not be applicable. No law or regulation affecting human and civil rights, freedoms and duties may be applied unless published officially for general information.

87. Universally recognized rules and principles of international law and international treaties of the Russian Federation form an integral part of its legal system. If an international agreement of the Russian Federation establishes rules which differ from those provided for by law, the rules of the international treaty shall prevail.

88. The President of the Russian Federation is the Head of State, and shall serve as the guarantor of the Constitution and of human and civil rights and freedoms, shall determine the main lines of domestic and foreign policy and shall represent the State within the country and in international relations (art. 80).

89. In accordance with the law, following the majority electoral system, the President of the Russian Federation is elected by an absolute majority and for a period of six years.

90. The President of the Russian Federation is also empowered to suspend the force of enactments of the executive authorities of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation in the event of that these enactments are at variance with the Constitution of the Russian Federation and its federal law or the international obligations of the Russian Federation or in breach of human and civil rights and freedoms, until such time as the matter is resolved by a competent court.

91. With the concurrence of the State Duma, the President of the Russian Federation appoints the Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, may decide to dismiss the Government of the Russian Federation and submits candidates for appointment as President of the Central Bank of the Russian Federation. On a proposal by the Prime Minister, the President appoints and dismisses deputy prime ministers of the Russian Federation and federal ministers, and submits candidates to the Federation Council for appointment as judges of the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation; The President appoints the judges of other federal courts, submits candidates for appointment to the posts of Procurator-General and Deputy Procurator-General of the Russian Federation, appoints

and dismisses the commanders-in-chief of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, and, following consultations with the appropriate committees or commissions of the chambers of the Federal Assembly, appoints and dismisses diplomatic envoys of the Russian Federation to foreign States and international organizations.

92. The President of the Russian Federation calls elections to the State Duma in accordance with the Constitution of the Russian Federation and federal law, may dissolve the State Duma in the cases and manner provided for by the Constitution, may call referendums in accordance with the procedure prescribed by federal constitutional law, signs and promulgates federal laws, and issues decrees and orders enforceable throughout the territory of the Russian Federation.

93. The President of the Russian Federation may use conciliatory procedures to resolve disagreements between the State authorities of the Russian Federation and the public authorities of the constituent entities of the Federation, and also those between different bodies within the constituent entities. In the event of failure to achieve a negotiated solution, the President may refer the dispute to the competent court.

94. The President of the Russian Federation is competent to decide on issues of citizenship of the Russian Federation and the conferring of political asylum and to grant pardons.

95. The right to initiate legislation is vested in the President, the Federation Council, members of the Federation Council, deputies of the State Duma, the Government, and the legislative (representative) bodies of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, and also in the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Court on matters within their respective jurisdiction. Federal laws are adopted by the State Duma and submitted to the Federation Council for its approval. Once adopted, a federal law is submitted within a period of five days to the President of the Russian Federation for signature and promulgation.

96. In conformity with articles 3 and 32 of the Constitution, referendums and free elections are the supreme direct manifestation of the authority of the people, and citizens of the Russian Federation have the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs both directly and through their representatives, to vote and to stand for election to central State authorities and to local government bodies and to participate in referendums.

97. Article 32 of the Constitution stipulates that citizens who have been found by a court of law to be lacking in legal capacity and those placed in custody pursuant to a court order shall not have the right to elect or to be elected.

98. Citizens of the Russian Federation participate in elections on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot. Their participation in elections and referendums is free and voluntary. No one may put pressure on citizens of the Russian Federation for the purpose of compelling them to participate or not to participate in elections, and no one may obstruct the free expression of their will. The commissions carry out the task of preparing and conducting elections and referendums, counting votes, establishing the outcome of voting, and determining the results of elections and referendums in an open and transparent manner. Within the limits of their jurisdiction, the commissions are independent of the central State authorities and local government bodies.

99. In the Russian Federation, as a federal State, legislative elections and referendums take place at three levels — federal, regional and municipal (or local) — and are conducted in all 85 constituent entities of the Federation. The terms of office of the central State authorities and local government bodies are set by the Constitution of the Russian Federation, the constitutions (or statutes) and the laws of the constituent entities of the Federation, and the statutes of municipalities.

100. The elections of the President of the Russian Federation and of the deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation are held at the federal level, and referendums may also be held on a nationwide basis.

101. The Federal Assembly — the parliament of the Russian Federation — is the representative and legislative body of the Russian Federation (art. 94) and consists of two chambers — the Federation Council and the State Duma (art. 95).

102. The Federation Council includes two representatives from each constituent entity of the Russian Federation — one from the legislative (representative) body and one from the executive body of each entity — and representatives of the Russian Federation, appointed by the President of the Russian Federation, whose total number may not exceed one tenth of the number of members of the Federation Council who are representatives of the legislative (representative) and executive bodies of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation.

103. The Federation Council has the authority to approve changes in the boundaries between the constituent entities of the Russian Federation; to ratify the decrees of the President of the Russian Federation on the declaration of war or introduction of a state of emergency; to decide on the possible use of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation outside the territory of the Russian Federation; to schedule elections of the President of the Russian Federation; to remove the President of the Russian Federation from office; to appoint the judges of the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation; and to appoint and dismiss the Procurator-General and the deputy procurators, the Deputy President of the Court of Auditors and one half of the members of the Court.

104. At elections of the deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, who are elected for terms of five years, 225 seats are allocated to one-seat constituencies on a first-past-the-post basis and 225 to a single Federation-wide constituency on the basis of proportional representation.

105. The jurisdiction of the State Duma extends to the following areas: consenting to the appointment by the President of the Russian Federation of the Prime Minister of the Russian Federation; resolving matters relating to confidence in the Government of the Russian Federation; hearing the annual reports of the Government of the Russian Federation on its performance; appointing and removing from office the President of the Central Bank of the Russian Federation, the President of the Court of Auditors and half of the members of the Court, and the Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation (Ombudsman); declaring amnesties; filing indictments against the President of the Russian Federation with a view to his or her impeachment.

106. In all 85 constituent entities of the Russian Federation, direct elections are organized at which citizens elect the legislative (representative) authority of their respective entity. The term of these authorities is set by the constitution (or statute) of the respective constituent entity and generally measures four or five years. In 6 of the 85 constituent entities (Republic of Dagestan, Republic of Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkar Republic, Republic of Kalmykia, Republic of Karachaevo-Cherkessia and the Chechen Republic), a proportional electoral system is followed and in the others a hybrid electoral system, except for the federal city of Moscow, which follows an exclusively first-past-the-post electoral system. Under the laws of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, the threshold set for the admission of lists of candidates nominated by the electoral associations under the proportional electoral system for the distribution of parliamentary seats may not be higher than 5 per cent.

107. The procedure for electing the top officials (heads of the supreme executive public authorities) of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation varies: in 75 constituent entities, the head is directly elected by citizens who reside in that constituent entity and who have the right to vote, in a secret ballot held on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage and, following the first-past-the-post electoral system, by an absolute majority, while in 10 constituent entities the heads are elected by deputies of the legislative (representative) body of that entity from among nominees submitted by the President of the Russian Federation. The term of these authorities is set by the constitution (or statute) of the respective constituent entity and may not exceed five years.

108. As a rule, in municipalities in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, direct elections are held for the members of local representative authorities, except for municipal districts and urban areas that are further subdivided. In these areas, there may be no direct elections to the representative municipal authority, which instead may be constituted by a process of delegating to the authority the directly elected heads and members of the representative bodies of the different localities within the municipal district and of the different boroughs making up a multi-borough municipality.

109. The preparation and holding of elections in the Russian Federation is entrusted to electoral commissions. These comprise the following: the Central Electoral Commission of the Russian Federation; electoral commissions of the 85 constituent entities of the Russian Federation; municipal electoral commissions; constituency electoral commissions (for the election of deputies); more than 2,700 commissions at the territorial level; and some 95,000 commissions at the ward level.

110. All electoral commissions, except those at the constituency level, are constituted for a period of five years. Depending on the electoral commission's level, when it is constituted no fewer than half of its members must be appointed on the basis of nominations by political parties which have submitted lists of candidates for the allocation of seats in the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, in the legislative (representative) authority of the respective constituent entity of the Russian Federation, or in the representative municipal body.

111. Special care is taken to verify information submitted by candidates for registration (information on convictions, citizenship, education, assets and income, securities and bank deposits, foreign financial instruments), and also by candidates and electoral associations on the results of electoral campaigns. Information about the income and expenditure of political parties and their consolidated financial statements is also carefully scrutinized.

112. The law of the Russian Federation guarantees the rights of observers, including foreign (international) observers and media representatives, to attend the meetings of electoral commissions. Under the law observers have the right to participate in the monitoring of elections from the time voting starts, including early voting, until confirmation of adoption of the election returns by the highest level commission.

113. Under Russian law, State and municipal media outlets are obliged to ensure equal conditions for election campaigns, in particular, in the cases provided by law, by providing equal amounts of airtime and print space, free of charge, to all candidates and political parties. Non-State media outlets must make paid airtime available on an equal basis to political parties and registered candidates for the purposes of election campaigning.

114. As at 2016, the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation had registered 77 political parties, 74 of which had the right to participate in elections. Currently 14 political parties have the right to participate in elections without the need to gather voter signatures.

115. In the Russian Federation, executive authority is vested in the Government of the Russian Federation (art. 110). In its work, the Government of the Russian Federation is guided by the principle that the Constitution of the Russian Federation, federal constitutional acts and federal laws shall take precedence, and by the principles of democracy, federalism, the separation of powers, accountability, transparency and respect for human and civil rights and freedoms.

116. The Government of the Russian Federation comprises its constituent members, namely, the Prime Minister and the deputy prime ministers of the Russian Federation and the federal ministers.

117. The Prime Minister of the Russian Federation is appointed by the President of the Russian Federation from among citizens of the Russian Federation who do not hold the nationality or residence permit of any foreign State, in the manner prescribed by the Constitution of the Russian Federation.

118. The deputy prime ministers of the Russian Federation and the federal ministers are appointed and dismissed by the President of the Russian Federation on a recommendation from the Prime Minister.

119. The Government of the Russian Federation is responsible, within the limits of its jurisdiction, for organizing the conduct of the country's domestic and foreign policy; for regulating social and economic matters; for ensuring the coherence of the system of executive authority in the Russian Federation, and directing and monitoring the activities of the federal bodies; for devising Federation-wide targeted programmes and ensuring their implementation; for exercising its vested right to mount legislative initiatives.

120. Article 19 of Federal Constitutional Act No. 2 of 17 December 1997, on the Government of the Russian Federation, defines the powers of the Government of the Russian Federation with regard to upholding the rule of law and the rights and freedoms of citizens and combating crime. The Government of the Russian Federation is directly involved in the design and implementation of public policies to ensure the safety of individuals, society and the State; carries out measures to promote the rule of law, to uphold the rights and freedoms of citizens, to ensure the protection of property and maintenance of law and order, and to combat crime and other socially dangerous phenomena; develops and implements measures to build staff capacity, and to extend and strengthen the infrastructure and facilities of law enforcement agencies; and carries out measures to support the work of the judicial authorities.

121. The Government of the Russian Federation submits annual performance reports to the State Duma.

122. Where organization and operation of the country's judicial authorities are concerned, the following basic principles are enshrined in the Constitution:

- Independence of judges (art. 120);
- Judges' security of tenure (art. 121);
- Inviolability of judges (art. 122);
- Prohibition of the establishment of extraordinary courts (art. 118);
- Adversarial nature and equality of the parties in judicial proceedings (art. 123).

123. The Constitution of the Russian Federation sets out the following basic guarantees of human rights in court proceedings:

- Equality of rights: "All persons shall be equal before the law and the court" (art. 19); public and religious associations are equal before the law (arts. 13 and 14);
- Inalienability of human rights: "Fundamental human rights and freedoms are inalienable and belong to every individual from the time of birth" (art. 17);
- Direct effect of human rights: "Human rights and freedoms shall be directly applicable" (art. 18);
- Defence of the right to life and personal dignity: "All persons shall have the right to life" (art. 20); "The dignity of the individual shall be protected by the State" (art. 21); "No person may be subjected to torture, violence or other cruel or degrading treatment or punishment" (art. 21);
- Legal protection: "All persons shall be guaranteed legal protection of their rights and freedoms" (art. 46); "State protection for human and civil rights and freedoms in the Russian Federation shall be guaranteed" (art. 45); decision of public authorities may be challenged in the courts (art. 46);
- Right to qualified legal assistance and access to a lawyer (art. 48);
- Presumption of innocence (art. 49);
- Access to the courts and the right to compensation for loss and damage suffered (arts. 52 and 53).

124. In accordance with article 118 (2) of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, judicial authority is exercised through constitutional, civil, administrative and criminal proceedings.

125. Pursuant to article 4 (2-4) of the federal constitutional act on the judicial system in the Russian Federation, the federal courts, constitutional (statutory) courts and magistrates of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation make up the judicial system of the Russian Federation.

126. The federal courts include the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation; The Supreme Court of the Russian Federation; the supreme courts of the republics, the territorial and provincial courts, the courts of the federal cities, the courts of the autonomous province and the autonomous areas, the district courts, the military and specialized courts, which

together constitute the system of federal courts of general jurisdiction; the district courts of arbitration, the arbitration appeal courts, the courts of arbitration of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation and the specialized courts of arbitration, which together constitute the system of federal courts of arbitration.

127. In accordance with article 125 of the Constitution, constitutional justice is administered in the Russian Federation by the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation — an autonomous and independent judicial body responsible for constitutional oversight. The powers of the Constitutional Court and the procedure for its establishment and operation are determined by federal constitutional law.

128. Acting on the request of authorized State bodies of the Russian Federation, the constituent entities of the Federation, one fifth of the members of the Federation Council or the deputies of the State Duma, the Constitutional Court considers issues relating to compliance with the Constitution by laws and regulations of the Russian Federation, treaties between the State authorities of the Federation and the public authorities of its constituent entities, and treaties between those public State authorities, and international treaties of the Russian Federation which have not yet entered into force. Enactments or their individual provisions which are found to be unconstitutional become null and void and international treaties of the Russian Federation which do not conform to the Constitution may not enter into force and shall not be applicable.

129. In dealing with complaints of infringements of the constitutional rights and freedoms of citizens, the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation verifies the constitutionality of the laws which have been applied and, at the request of the courts, of those which are to be applied in specific instances.

130. The jurisdiction of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation also extends to the settlement of disputes between public authorities regarding their respective competence, official interpretation of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, the adoption of findings on the observance of the prescribed procedure for filing an indictment against the President of the Russian Federation for treason or other serious offences, along with a number of other powers.

131. The Supreme Court of the Russian Federation is the highest judicial authority for civil cases, the settlement of economic disputes and of criminal, administrative and other cases which fall under the jurisdiction of courts set up pursuant to federal constitutional law, exercises judicial oversight of the work of these courts in accordance with the procedures prescribed by law and provides clarifications on matters of judicial practice (Constitution, art. 126).

132. The judicial authorities of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation include: the constitutional (statutory) courts of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation and the magistrates who have the status of judges of ordinary jurisdiction of those constituent entities.

133. The judicial system of the Russian Federation is established by the Constitution and by federal constitutional law. The establishment of special courts is prohibited. Judicial power is exercised through constitutional, civil, administrative and criminal court proceedings. In civil, administrative and criminal proceedings, a distinction is made between courts of first instance, appeal courts, courts of cassation and supervisory courts. Courts of the latter two categories hear cases concerning appeals against decisions and judgments which have become enforceable.

II. General framework for the protection and promotion of human rights

134. The Russian Federation is a State party to the following core human rights instruments:

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;

- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
- Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol;
- Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict;
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

135. The Russian Federation is also party to the following international instruments under the Council of Europe relating to the promotion and protection of human rights:

- Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms;
- Protocol to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms;
- Protocol No. 2 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, conferring upon the European Court of Human Rights competence to give advisory opinions;
- Protocol No. 3 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, amending articles 29, 30 and 34 of the Convention;
- Protocol No. 4 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, securing certain rights and freedoms other than those already included in the Convention and in the first Protocol thereto;
- Protocol No. 5 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, amending articles 22 and 40 of the Convention;
- Protocol No. 7 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms;
- Protocol No. 8 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms;
- Protocol No. 9 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms;
- Protocol No. 10 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms;
- Protocol No. 11 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, restructuring the control machinery established thereby;
- Protocol No. 14 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, amending the control system of the Convention;
- Protocol No. 15 amending the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms;
- Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities;
- European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;

- Protocol No. 1 to the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
- Protocol No. 2 to the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
- European Social Charter (revised);
- European Convention on the Equivalence of Diplomas leading to Admission to Universities;
- Protocol to the European Convention on the Equivalence of Diplomas leading to Admission to Universities;
- European Convention on the Equivalence of Periods of University Study;
- European Convention on the General Equivalence of Periods of University Study;
- European Convention on the Academic Recognition of University Qualifications;
- Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region;
- Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse;
- European Convention on Extradition;
- Additional Protocol to the European Convention on Extradition;
- Second Additional Protocol to the European Convention on Extradition;
- Fourth Additional Protocol to the European Convention on Extradition;
- European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters;
- Additional Protocol to the European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters;
- European Convention on the Transfer of Proceedings in Criminal Matters;
- Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime;
- Convention on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons;
- Additional Protocol to the Convention on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons;
- Criminal Law Convention on Corruption;
- European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism;
- Protocol amending the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism;
- Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism;
- Convention for the Protection of Individuals with Regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data;
- European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events and in particular at Football Matches;
- European Charter of Local Self-Government.

136. Periodic reports on the implementation of the provisions of those treaties are submitted in a timely manner to the relevant human rights treaty bodies. By its decision No. 323 of 3 June 2003, approving the inter-agency distribution of responsibilities to ensure the participation of the Russian Federation in international organizations of the United Nations system, the Government of the Russian Federation identified the federal executive authorities responsible for the preparation of the periodic reports on the implementation of its international treaties. As part of the preparation of these reports, use is made of materials submitted by the relevant federal executive authorities and the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, consultations are held with civil society bodies (federal autonomous

ethnic and cultural organizations and non-governmental organizations, including human rights organizations, religious associations and others) and expert institutions.

137. The Constitution of the Russian Federation stipulates that, in the Russian Federation, human and civil rights and freedoms shall be recognized and upheld in accordance with the universally acknowledged rules and principles of international law.

138. The provisions of chapter 2 of the Constitution, "Human and civil rights and freedoms", are based on the rules of key international legal instruments on human rights and are not subject to review by the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation.

139. The following universal guarantees of human, individual and civil rights and freedoms are enshrined in the Constitution of the Russian Federation:

- Recognition and security of rights and freedoms, in line with the universally acknowledged rules and principles of international law and in accordance with the Constitution of the Russian Federation (art. 17, part 1);
- Guarantee by the State of the equality of rights and freedoms (art. 19);
- Protection of rights and freedoms as the responsibility of the State (art. 45, part 1);
- People's right to defend their rights and freedoms by all means not prohibited by law (art. 45, part 2);
- Judicial protection of rights and freedoms (art. 46, part 1);
- International protection of rights and freedoms (art. 46, part 3);
- Inalienable nature of rights and freedoms (art. 55, part 2);
- Full and independent exercise by citizens, upon attainment of the prescribed age, of their rights and freedoms (art. 60).

140. The list of human rights and fundamental freedoms set out in the Constitution is fully concordant with the provisions of international covenants on human rights. These include the right to life (art. 20), protection of the dignity of the individual (art. 21), the right to liberty and security of person (art. 22), freedom from interference in privacy and family life (art. 23), the inviolability of the home (art. 25), freedom of conscience and religious confession (art. 28), people's right freely to determine their nationality and to use their native language (art. 26), and freedom of thought and speech (art. 29).

141. All persons legally in the territory of the Russian Federation have the right freely to move about, to choose their temporary or permanent place of residence, and to leave the country and return without hindrance (art. 27).

142. The Constitution of the Russian Federation also stipulates a number of other political and civil rights inherent in a democratic society, including the right of Russian citizens to participate in public affairs, to vote and to be elected, to enjoy equal access to public service, and to participate in the administration of justice (art. 32). In particular, the Constitution of the Russian Federation stipulates that everyone has the right of association (art. 30) and peaceful assembly (art. 31).

143. In proclaiming the Russian Federation as a social State whose policy is designed to create the necessary conditions to ensure a life of dignity and the free development of the individual and in which labour and health are protected, State support is provided to persons with disabilities, and State pensions, benefits and other forms of social protection are guaranteed (art. 7), the Constitution of the Russian Federation enshrines the right of all individuals to make free use of their aptitudes for work and freely to choose their occupation and profession; prohibits forced labour; and guarantees remuneration for labour without any discrimination and at a rate not below the minimum wage stipulated by federal law (art. 37). The Constitution enshrines the right of citizens to social security in old age and in the event of illness, disability, loss of a breadwinner, for the upbringing of children, and in other circumstances prescribed by law (which entails, among other measures, the creation of the pension system and the introduction of forms of social support for certain categories of citizens — persons with disabilities, veterans, orphans, and others) (art. 39). All persons have the right to protection of health and to medical care, which is provided to citizens free of

charge in State and municipal institutions, the costs covered by the corresponding budget, insurance premiums, other forms of revenue (art. 41), to a favourable environment, to reliable information on the state of the environment and to reparation for the damage caused to their health or property by breaches of environmental law (art. 41). The Constitution guarantees the protection by the State of motherhood and childhood and of the family (art. 38), a provision that is reflected in particular in the guarantee set out in special legislation of the right of a mother of a child, or another person actually caring for the child, to take leave to care for the child until the child attains the age of 3, and also in the introduction of additional measures of State support for families with children, through the provision of certificates entitling the holder to maternal (or family) allowances.

144. Citizens have the right to education (art. 43), to participate in cultural life and use cultural institutions, and to have access to cultural assets (art. 44).

145. The Constitution of the Russian Federation establishes the right of private property, which is one of the cornerstones of the freedom of the individual (art. 35).

146. Human and civil rights and freedoms are directly applicable. They determine the purpose, content and application of laws and the activities of the legislature, the executive and local government bodies and are assured by the justice system (Constitution, art. 18).

147. The right of everyone to seek redress from the State for harm suffered as a result of the unlawful actions, or inaction, of State bodies or officials is guaranteed under article 53 of the Constitution.

148. Practical aspects of the protection of certain categories of human rights are governed by the rules of sector-specific legislation, for example:

- Federal Act No. 62 of 31 May 2002 (version of 1 May 2016), on citizenship of the Russian Federation;
- Federal Act No. 67 of 12 June 2002, on fundamental guarantees of electoral rights and the right to participate in referendums of citizens of the Russian Federation;

  Act No. 5242-1 of 25 June 1993, on the right of nationals of the Russian Federation to freedom of movement and to the choice of a temporary or permanent place of residence in the Russian Federation;
- Federal Act No. 125 of 26 September 1997 (version of 6 July 2016), on freedom of conscience and religious associations;
- Federal Act No. 95 of 11 July 2001 (version of 19 December 2016), on political parties;
- Federal Act No. 82 of 19 May 1995, on public associations;
- Federal Act No. 7 of 12 January 1996, on non-profit organizations;
- Federal Act No. 323 of 21 November 2011, on the principles of the public health care system in the Russian Federation;
- Federal Act No. 124 of 24 July 1998, on fundamental guarantees of the rights of the child in the Russian Federation;
- Federal Act No. 326 of 29 November 2010, on compulsory health insurance in the Russian Federation;
- Federal Act No. 273 of 29 December 2012, on education in the Russian Federation;
- Federal Act No. 127 of 23 August 1996, on science and State scientific and technical policy, determining that management operations should not breach the freedom of scientific work;
- Federal Act No. 78 of 29 December 1994, on library services;
- Federal Act No. 125 of 22 October 2004, on the archival system in the Russian Federation;

- Act No. 1032-1 of the Russian Federation of 19 April 1991, on employment in the Russian Federation;
- Federal Act No. 400 of 28 December 2013, on insurance pensions;
- Federal Act No. 166 of 15 December 2001, on State pensions in the Russian Federation;
- Federal Act No. 178 of 17 July 1999, on State social assistance;
- Federal Act No. 167 of 15 December 2001, on compulsory pension insurance in the Russian Federation;
- Federal Act No. 81 of 19 May 1995, on State benefits for citizens with children;
- Federal Act No. 256 of 29 December 2006, on supplemental forms of State support for families with children;
- Federal Act No. 165 of 16 July 1999, on the principles of compulsory social insurance;
- Federal Act No. 424 of 28 December 2013, on contributory pensions;
- Federal Act No. 115 of 25 July 2002 (version of 17 April 2017), on the legal status of foreign citizens in the Russian Federation;
- Federal Act No. 181 of 24 November 1995 (version of 7 March 2017), on the social protection of persons with disabilities in the Russian Federation;
- Federal Act No. 4519 of 1 December 2014, on the amendment of certain statutory instruments of the Russian Federation pertaining to the social protection of persons with disabilities in connection with the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- Federal Act No. 4528-1 of 19 February 1993, on refugees;
- Federal Act No. 4530-1 of 19 February 1993, on internally displaced persons;
- Federal Act No. 73 of 25 June 2002, on cultural heritage sites (historical and cultural monuments) of the peoples of the Russian Federation.

149. Under article 46, part 1, of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, the judicial protection of the rights and freedoms of all persons is guaranteed. Accordingly, procedural legislation enshrines the right of all persons to apply to the courts to protect their rights and lawful interests. The courts are able in their decisions to cite the provisions of international human rights instruments to which the Russian Federation is a party.

150. Citizens are also entitled, in accordance with chapter XIII of Federal Constitutional Act No. 1 of 21 July 1994, on the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation, to petition the courts for the right to request the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation to examine the constitutionality of the law to be applied in specific cases.

151. Statutory instruments and their provisions found to be unconstitutional shall be deemed null and void and shall not be applicable. In addition, citizens and (or) associations of citizens which have applied to the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation shall be reimbursed expenses incurred in connection with their appearance before the court and compensated for their effective loss of time with funds from the corresponding budgets and in accordance with the procedure and to the extent stipulated by the Government of the Russian Federation.

152. When the judgment reached in a specific case is the subject of an appeal by a petitioner to the Constitutional Court and the law applied in that case is determined to have been at variance with the Constitution, such determination shall be grounds for a review by the courts, in the light of these new circumstances, of the judicial act that has become enforceable. Comparable consequences shall also flow from the determination that a law is constitutional in the interpretation given by the Constitutional Court.

153. The work of defending violated or disputed rights, freedoms and lawful interests of citizens and the rights and lawful interests of organizations is also performed by the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, the ordinary courts and the courts of arbitration in in

considering cases falling within their jurisdiction involving complaints contesting legal and other enactments by State bodies and local administrations, and also contesting decisions and acts or omissions of public authorities, other State bodies, military administrative bodies, local government bodies, officials, public and municipal employees.

154. In the event that a court deems a statutory or regulatory enactment invalid in whole or in part, that enactment or certain of its provisions shall be inapplicable with effect from the date specified by the court in its decision.

155. Under the provisions of procedural legislation, in response to complaints by the parties concerned, the legality of judgments may be verified through a process of appellate, cassational and supervisory review.

156. Under federal law, compensation may be awarded for infringement of the right of access to legal proceedings or to enforcement of a court ruling within a reasonable period.

157. Supervision of the enforcement of laws is the responsibility of the procuratorial system of the Russian Federation, together with other oversight bodies — the federal supervisory services for education and science, for communications, information technology and mass media, and for natural resource management, and the federal services for labour and employment, for State registration, for land registration and cartography, and for veterinary and phytosanitary oversight. Other executive authorities, primarily the federal ministries of health, of culture, of education and science, of labour and social security, and of sport, and the federal agencies for youth affairs and for ethnic affairs, monitor the observance of constitutional rights and freedoms and also promote the exercise of these rights and freedoms in other ways.

158. The procuratorial service of the Russian Federation is a consolidated and centralized system of offices which, on behalf of the Russian Federation, are responsible for supervising compliance with the Constitution of the Russian Federation and the implementation of laws in force in the Federation. In the procuratorial system, junior procurators answer to higher-ranking procurators and to the Procurator-General of the Russian Federation. Pursuant to Federal Act No. 2202-1 of 17 January 1992, on the procuratorial service of the Russian Federation, the procuratorial service is responsible for overseeing compliance with the law by the federal executive authorities, the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation, the representative (legislative) and executive authorities of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, local governments, military administrative authorities, monitoring bodies and their officials, entities involved in public monitoring of the observance of human rights in custodial facilities and in providing assistance to persons held in custody, and the boards and directors of commercial and non-commercial organizations, and also for verifying the lawfulness of the legal instruments enacted by these authorities.

159. In addition, the procuratorial service supervises the enforcement of the law by bodies responsible for conducting police and detective work, initial inquiries and pretrial investigations, by court bailiffs, by the administrations of the bodies and institutions enforcing penalties and applying coercive measures handed down by the courts, and by the administrations of detention and remand facilities.

160. The competence of the procuratorial service extends to criminal prosecutions in accordance with the powers conferred upon it by the criminal procedural law of the Russian Federation, to coordination of the activities mounted by law enforcement agencies to combat crime, to the initiation of proceedings involving administrative offences and for the conduct of administrative investigations in accordance with the powers conferred by the Code of Administrative Offences of the Russian Federation and by other federal laws.

161. In accordance with their areas of authority, procuratorial offices consider applications, complaints and other submissions reporting infringements of the law. Decisions taken by procurators shall not prevent the persons concerned from seeking protection of their rights in the court, as stipulated in article 10, part 1, of Federal Act No. 2202-1 of 17 January 1992, on the procuratorial service of the Russian Federation.

162. In exercising their functions to oversee the observance of human and civil rights and freedoms, procurators consider and verify applications, complaints and other reports of infringements of human and civil rights and freedoms, inform the victims about the procedure

for the protection of their rights and freedoms, and take measures to prevent and suppress violations of human and civil rights and freedoms, to bring to justice persons who have broken the law, and to obtain redress for any damage caused.

163. If there are grounds to believe that a breach of human and civil rights and freedoms is tantamount to a criminal offence, the procurator shall ensure that the perpetrators are prosecuted in accordance with the law.

164. In cases where violations of human and civil rights and freedoms fall in the category of administrative offences, the procurators initiate proceedings for an administrative offence or promptly forward the communication regarding the offence and the findings of their verification to the body or official authorized to consider cases involving administrative offences.

165. In cases where the human and civil rights and freedoms protected in civil and administrative court proceedings have been violated and where, for reasons of infirmity, age or other circumstances, the victims are unable personally to defend their rights and freedoms in court or in an arbitral tribunal or where the rights and freedoms of a significant number of citizens have been violated or where, by virtue of other circumstances, the violation has acquired special public importance, the procurator shall bring proceedings before the court or the arbitral tribunal and prosecute the case on behalf of the victims (Procuratorial Service Act, art. 27).

166. In addition, procurators have the right to file applications with the court or to intervene in a case at any stage in the proceedings if this is necessary for the defence of human rights or of legally protected interests of society and the State.

167. The road map for the development of the penal correction system of the Russian Federation to the year 2020, approved by government order No. 1772 of 14 October 2010, is geared towards the further liberalization of the penal correction policy and the introduction of a more humane approach to the enforcement of sentences.

168. In 2016, the country's penal correction system included 757 correctional facilities, including 505 correctional colonies, 125 open prisons, 30 young offenders' institutions, 63 secure hospitals, 26 medical treatment and prevention centres, 8 prisons, 218 remand centres and 108 other premises operating as remand centres. In 2015, the total number of suspects, accused and convicted persons held in facilities of the penal correction system declined by more than 25,000.

169. Systematic and sustained efforts are being made to improve the conditions under which suspects, accused persons and convicts are held, in line with the requirements of Russian law and the universally recognized rues of international law.

170. By its decision No. 540 of 5 September 2006, the Government of the Russian Federation approved the special federal programme for the development of the penal correction system over the period 2007-2016, under which 13 new remand centres were built in keeping with international standards. Currently, a draft version has been drawn up of the special federal programme for the development of the penal correction system over the period 2017-2025, which includes plans for the design, refurbishment and construction of 829 facilities.

171. The facilities of the penal correction system are equipped with the latest telecommunications technologies and state-of-the-art equipment.

172. Following 26 separate checks, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment reported that, over the course of many years, the Russian authorities had been making sustained efforts to combat overcrowding and improve the physical conditions in remand centres.

173. Since 2001, the Russian Federation has had at its disposal a system of assistant chiefs of the local offices of the Russian Federal Penal Correction Service responsible for ensuring respect for the rights and lawful interests of persons held in the penal correction system. Their principal function is the day-to-day monitoring of observance of the rights and lawful interests of suspects, accused and convicted persons, and the adoption of measures to restore the violated rights of citizens in this category.

174. The medical care of convicted and remand prisoners is ensured by 136 hospitals specializing in various fields and by medical units or health posts in each facility, 57 secure hospitals for tuberculosis patients, and 9 secure hospitals for persons suffering from drug addiction. Attention is given to the provision of appropriate rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities.

175. The compulsory general education syllabus is made available to persons below the age of 30 in custodial facilities.

176. Particular attention is accorded in the Russian Federation to alternatives to imprisonment. Thus, persons sentenced to punishments which do not require them to be isolated from society are registered with the system of probation offices: there are 81 such offices in the penal correction system, with 2,407 subsidiary branches.

177. In the constituent entities of the Russian Federation there are 130 special programmes in operation to provide social assistance for persons registered with these probation offices.

178. Federal Act No. 103 of 20 April 2015, amending article 14 of the Penal Enforcement Code and other statutory instruments of the Russian Federation, regulates the presence of religious organizations in custodial facilities, the procedure for arranging face-to-face meetings with members of the clergy and the conduct of religious rites and ceremonies in penal institutions.

179. A system has been established to monitor the operation of detention facilities, in compliance with Federal Act 76 of 10 June 2008, on public oversight of the observance of human rights in detention facilities and the provision of assistance to inmates of such facilities. There are public oversight commissions in operation in 80 territorial bodies, with a total staff complement of more than 1,100 employees.

180. With regard to practical aspects of the work to uphold human rights, continued efforts are being made in the Russian Federation to create an enabling environment for the exercise by citizens of the rights accorded to them; strategies and master plans have been formulated, appropriate arrangements have been set in place and special federal programmes have been approved and implemented with the aim of promoting and protecting fundamental freedoms and human rights.

181. The promotion and protection of the rights of certain categories of the population (children, the elderly, veterans, persons with disabilities, ethnic or religious minorities, indigenous peoples, refugees, migrant workers) are ensured, within their respective areas of competence, by the relevant federal executive authorities (the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Labour, the Federal Agency for Ethnic Affairs, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education and Science).

182. Issues relating to protection of the rights of ethnic minorities and small indigenous minorities of the Russian Federation, their languages and cultural heritage are regulated by Federal Act No. 82 of 30 April 1999, on guarantees of the rights of small indigenous minorities of the Russian Federation, and reflected in the blueprint for a State ethnic policy of the Russian Federation for the period to 2025, ratified by Presidential Decree No. 1666 of 19 December 2012, and in the road map for the sustainable development of the small indigenous minorities of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation, ratified by government order No. 132 of 4 February 2009.

183. On 8 March 2017, the national strategy for women for the period 2017-2022 was ratified by government order No. 410. The strategy outlines the principal areas of the State policy for women and is designed to set in place conditions for the full and equal participation of women in the political, economic, social and cultural domains of society.

184. Responsibility for implementing the strategy is vested in a coordinating council set up under the Government of the Russian Federation, whose membership includes representatives of both the executive and the legislature and also from civil society.

185. The State programme of the Russian Federation for the promotion of employment was ratified by government decision No. 298 of 15 April 2014.

186. A long-term strategy for the development of the pension system of the Russian Federation was ratified by government order of 25 December 2012, setting out social priorities and benchmarks and outlining arrangements for State policy in the area of pension insurance for the period up to 2030.

187. The State programme of the Russian Federation for the social welfare of the population was ratified by government decision No. 296 of 15 April 2014.

188. The national strategy on action for children for the period 2012-2017 was ratified by Presidential Decree No. 761 of 1 June 2012. The strategy is designed to improve the situation of children, in keeping with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

189. The road map for a State family policy in the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025 was ratified by government order No. 1618 of 25 August 2014.

190. The State programme of the Russian Federation for the period 2015-2020 on the provision to citizens of affordable and comfortable housing and utilities was ratified by government order No. 323 of 15 April 2014.

191. In 2012, a road map was adopted for the State migration policy of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025. The cornerstones of the migration policy are its provisions upholding human and civil rights and freedoms and prohibiting any form of discrimination.

192. The State programme for assisting the voluntary resettlement in the Russian Federation of ethnic Russians living abroad was ratified by Presidential Decree No. 637 of 22 June 2006.

193. The State education programme of the Russian Federation for the period 2013-2020 was ratified by government order No. 295 of 15 April 2014.

194. The State programme of the Russian Federation for the period 2011-2020 on the provision of accessible environments was ratified by government order No. 1297 of 1 December 2015.

195. A State strategy for the period up to 2025 to promote the welfare of senior citizens was ratified by government order No. 164 of 5 February 2016.

196. The State health-care programme of the Russian Federation for the period 2013-2020 was ratified by government order No. 294 of 15 April 2014.

197. The State environmental protection programme of the Russian Federation for the period 2012-2020 was ratified by government order No. 326 of 15 April 2014.

198. The road map for the long-term social and economic development of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2020 and the State programme for the development of physical culture and sport set out the country's public policy goals in the area of physical culture and sport.

199. The State programme for the development of physical culture and sport of the Russian Federation for the period 2013-2020 was ratified by government order No. 317 of 15 April 2014.

200. The underlying principles of the State youth policy in the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025 were ratified by government order No. 2403 of 29 November 2014.

201. The State programme of the Russian Federation for the period 2011-2020 for the development of an information society was ratified by government order No. 313 of 15 April 2014.

202. The State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation plays prominent role in the promotion and protection of human rights.

203. The task of preparing and submitting for adoption draft federal acts on the ratification of international treaties with human rights implications, and draft legal instruments designed to create a legal framework for the implementation by the State of its obligations pursuant upon the accession by the Russian Federation to one or another international treaty is performed by the specialized committees of the State Duma.

204. In particular, at the current time, regulations on non-discrimination are enshrined in virtually all sector-specific laws. In recent years, extensive legislative work has been carried out to develop the institutions of the electoral system and to upgrade the legal framework for the establishment and operation of political parties. A comprehensive array of laws and regulations has been adopted to bring the legislation of the Russian Federation into line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Concerted efforts are being made to set in place legal arrangements to fulfil the State's obligations in respect of persons with disabilities under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

205. An extensive public debate on issues related to the ratification of international treaties and their implementation is conducted by the State Duma. Measures conducted to that end include parliamentary hearings, round tables and consultations with the involvement of representatives of the relevant ministries and institutions, experts from the field and non-governmental organizations.

206. The Office of Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation, or Ombudsman, has been established pursuant to article 103 (1 (e)) of the Constitution of the Russian Federation to ensure State protection of citizens' rights and freedoms and their observance and respect by State authorities and local government bodies and officials.

207. The legal framework for the work of the Ombudsman is regulated by Federal Constitutional Act No. 1 of 26 February 1997, on the Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation, pursuant to which the Ombudsman receives complaints from citizens of the Russian Federation, and also from foreign nationals and stateless persons present in the territory of the Russian Federation, against decisions or acts (or omissions) by State authorities or local government offices, officials and civil servants, in cases where complainants have already filed appeals against these decisions or acts (or omissions) in judicial or administrative proceedings, but do not accept the decisions taken on their complaints. The Ombudsman has the authority to take action on her or his own initiative if the information points to flagrant or massive violations of citizens' rights, if the case is of special public significance or if there is need to protect the interests of persons who are unable by their own devices to take advantage of legal remedies.

208. In order to protect the rights and freedoms of citizens which have been breached by the decisions or acts (or omissions) of a State authority, local government office or official, the Ombudsman is authorized to refer the matter to the court, and also to participate in the legally prescribed manner, either in person or through her or his representative, in the legal proceedings. The Ombudsman may also submit complaints to the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation concerning the violation of citizens' constitutional rights and freedoms through the application of a specific law.

209. Under article 3 of the aforementioned Federal Constitutional Act, the Ombudsman's work only complements the existing remedies for the protection of human rights and freedoms, and does not override or entail the review of the competence of the State bodies responsible for the protection and restoration of those rights and freedoms (the judicial and procuratorial authorities and the State and departmental oversight offices). There are no legal requirements for complaints of human rights violations to be referred to the Ombudsman in the event of the exhaustion of domestic remedies.

210. After considering and analysing information on the violation of the rights and freedoms of citizens and the consolidated outcome of complaints proceedings, the Ombudsman has the power to submit comments and suggestions of a general nature to State authorities, local government offices and officials, regarding means of upholding the rights and freedoms of citizens and of improving administrative procedures, and also to submit to legal entities authorized to process legislative initiatives proposals on the amendment of the law to bring it into line with the universally recognized rules and principles of international law.

211. In the event of flagrant or massive violations of human and civil rights and freedoms, the Ombudsman has the power to report to the State Duma at its regular meeting, to propose the establishment of a parliamentary commission to investigate the facts and circumstances which have provided the grounds for a parliamentary investigation, and to participate in its work, either directly or through a representative, and also to participate in meetings of the

chambers of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation called to consider whether or not to approve of the final report of the said parliamentary commission. In addition, the Commissioner has the power to submit proposals to the State Duma on the conduct of parliamentary hearings to consider reported violations of the rights and freedoms of citizens, and also to participate in such parliamentary hearings either directly or through a representative.

212. At the end of the calendar year, the Ombudsman submits an activities report to the President of the Russian Federation, the Federation Council and the State Duma, the Government of the Russian Federation, the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation, the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, the Procurator-General of the Russian Federation and the Chair of the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation. the Ombudsman may also submit special reports to the State Duma on specific issues relating to observance of the rights and freedoms of citizens in the Russian Federation,

213. Offices of regional human rights commissioners, or ombudsmen, have been established in all the constituent entities of the Russian Federation and are operating successfully.

214. The range of public human rights institutions in the Russian Federation has been further expanded with the establishment of the specialized commissioner posts, such as the Presidential Commissioner for the Rights of the Child and the Presidential Commissioner for the Protection of the Rights of Entrepreneurs, together with corresponding posts in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation.

215. Under the legislation of a number of Russian regions (Republic of Sakha-Yakutia, Kamchatka territory, Krasnoyarsk territory), special posts have been created for commissioners for the rights of indigenous peoples of the North and the Far East.

216. In 2009, the bureau of the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, under the Human Rights Council, confirmed the accreditation of the Ombudsman of the Russian Federation in accordance with the Paris Principles, with the highest status, A. Reaccreditation was granted in 2014.

217. Pursuant to Presidential Decree No. 120 of 1 February 2011, a council was established in the Office of the President for the development of civil society and human rights. The Council is an advisory body set up to assist the President in the exercise of the President's constitutional powers in the area of the promotion and protection of human and civil rights and freedoms, to keep the President informed about the situation in that area, to promote the development of civil society institutions in the country and to put forward proposals on matters falling within its competence. The Council comprises representatives of prominent Russian human rights organizations, along with journalists, lawyers and activists. Its membership is approved by the President of the Russian Federation. The Council holds special thematic sessions, prepares opinions on federal bills, and organizes retreats in various regions of the country. Recommendations based on the outcome of these retreats are submitted to the President and the relevant public authorities. At its annual meetings with the President of the Russian Federation, the Council reports directly on progress in the development of civil society and human rights in the Russian Federation.

218. In addition, the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation was set up in accordance with Federal Act No. 32 of 4 April 2005, on the formation of such a chamber. Its principal function is to secure the engagement of citizens and civil society institutions with the central State authorities and local government bodies, to ensure that due account is taken of the needs and interests of citizens and the protection of their rights and freedoms in the formulation and implementation of State policy, and also to provide public oversight of the activities of the authorities. Civic chambers have also been set up in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation. The Civic Chamber prepares an annual report on the state of civil society in the Russian Federation, which is posted on the website www.oprf.ru.

219. Issues relating to the publication of international instruments in the Russian Federation are governed by Federal Act No. 101 of 15 July 1995, on international treaties of the Russian Federation, which provides that international treaties which have entered into

force for the Russian Federation shall, on the recommendation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, be published in the compendium of laws of the Russian Federation and the bulletin of international agreements and posted on the Government's official legislation portal (www.pravo.gov.ru).

220. Russian citizens also have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the text of international human rights instruments on the websites of the United Nations and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and also on the free online legal databases KonsultantPlus and Garant. The concluding observations of the human rights treaty bodies on individual communications are published in the journal *Rossiyskoe Pravosudie* (Russian Justice), and are also accessible on the OHCHR website.

221. Under Russian law, enactments of the President of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Russian Federation, regulations and statutes of the federal executive authorities, federal constitutional acts and other federal acts, enactments of the chambers of the Federal Assembly and rulings and other decisions of the Constitutional Court must be made publicly available. The above instruments are published in the official gazette, the parliamentary gazette and the compendium of laws of the Russian Federation and posted on the Government's official legislation portal (www.pravo.gov.ru).

222. Decisions of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation are also published in the official journal of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation and, if necessary, in other publications and also posted on the website of the Court — www.ksrf.ru.

223. The decisions of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation are published in the Court's official bulletin and also posted on its website — www.vsrf.ru.

224. Decisions of the ordinary courts and of the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Court are publicly available on the website sudat.ru and may also be found in the free online legal databases KonsultantPlus and Garant.

225. The Russian Federation attaches great importance to the promotion of legal awareness and knowledge of the law among its citizens. The cornerstones, objectives, main thrusts and substance of public policies are set out in the principles of the State policy of the Russian Federation for the development of the legal awareness and knowledge of the law of its citizens, which has been ratified by the President of the Russian Federation.

226. State policy geared towards the promotion of legal awareness is carried out in parallel with a package of measures to improve the country's legislation and its practical application, to enhance the effectiveness of State and municipal management and law enforcement work, to combat corruption and the subversion of democratic public goals and objectives for bureaucratic purposes.

227. The Russian authorities are taking steps to establish a system of continuing legal education. As part of the road map for the continuous education of adults in the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025, an inter-agency working group has been set in operation, with the involvement of federal and regional executive authorities, and civil society and professional organizations. The group's work is coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation.

228. Close attention is paid to the training of law enforcement officials in the field of human rights. Extensive work has been organized for the systematic familiarization and training of the staff of internal affairs bodies in the requirements of Russian law and international standards in the field of human rights. Steps are being taken to enhance awareness of the rule of law among law enforcement staff and to strengthen their skills in communicating with representatives of civil society institutions, migrants and members of different ethnic and religious groups, with due sensitivity to the specific ethnic, religious and cultural features of the different regions of the country.

229. In addition, training workshops for law-enforcement staff routinely include the study of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights in cases involving the Russian Federation, and also high-profile cases involving other countries alleging violations of citizens' rights and freedoms by law enforcement authorities.

230. Refresher courses on human rights are regularly held for members of the judiciary and public officials of the Russian Federation, primarily from law enforcement agencies. During such courses, officials are informed about the principal human rights instruments and the current practice of the international and regional human rights bodies.

231. In the Russian Federation, human rights education forms an important part of the development of civil society and is based on an integrated approach.

232. The school system offers a range of opportunities for the fostering of legal awareness among pupils both in primary and basic schools and in the upper levels of secondary education.

233. In primary schools, a process is followed whereby children develop an awareness of themselves and of others as individuals, fundamental moral values and standards of behaviour are inculcated, an understanding of human rights and the value of human life is imparted and patterns of good behaviour at school, in the home, in public places and in the outside world are developed. Schoolchildren gain an understanding of the Russian State and its symbols and attributes, and of the notion of citizenship.

234. In basic schools, work is continuing on the preparation of ethical guidelines and development of political and legal awareness, relating in particular to changes in the social and legal status of young people. Through the study of history, pupils gain a better understanding of the State and the law and the inseparable links between them, and of the relationship between the State and its citizens. Efforts are being made to develop a system of values and benchmarks and to foster in pupils a sense of responsibility for their actions. Social science is now systematically taught in schools and constitutes an essential element in the process of developing legal awareness. Schoolchildren can choose among a range of subjects, such as "Fundamentals of law", "Constitutional law", "Your rights in daily life", and attention is given to such topics as the citizenship responsibilities of teenagers, civil and political rights, and social, economic and cultural rights. The curricula in the areas of social studies, humanities and economics include a stand-alone course in law.

235. The general history course gives particular emphasis to belief-based and law-based approaches to the notion of human rights.

236. In senior classes, pupils learn how to apply critical analysis to legal situations and to information and its sources, with a view to determining their own views and to ascertaining their own position vis-à-vis the issue under consideration. They also develop their capacity for dialogue with different social groups, with social and political organizations, and with the authorities, and learn the skill of tackling contentious issues in a constructive manner.

237. Schools also offer extracurricular and after-school activities related to the teaching of law, including the arrangement of visits with the law enforcement authorities.

238. Special attention is paid to the inclusion of human rights programmes in higher education. In accordance with the OHCHR framework for cooperation with the Russian Federation for 2007 and beyond, a master's programme on human rights is being established at a group of leading Russian universities. The programme will train highly qualified specialists in this field. The syllabus for the master's programme comprises specially designed and adapted modules, including the study of the United Nations human rights mechanisms and the experience of human rights protection work in various regions of the world. In addition to Russian specialists, international human rights experts are regularly invited to give lectures under the programme (on average, 10-12 foreign lecturers are invited every year).

239. Master's students have the opportunity to attend the Venice summer school on human rights and to perform a pre-degree internship in one of the universities forming part of the Venice International University consortium. By the end of the 2015/16 school year, 92 students had completed the master's programme. Graduates of the programme are now working in Russian government agencies, human rights non-governmental organizations, international organizations, academic institutions and United Nations agencies.

240. Summer schools on human rights are also organized under the programme, with the participation not only of master's students from the Russian university group, but of anyone

interested in attending, including undergraduates, postgraduates and lecturers from other universities. The classes in these summer schools are given by practising lawyers and human rights defenders. The purpose of these schools is to raise awareness of human rights and strengthen the existing skills and knowledge of Russian students and all persons with an interest in this field.

241. In addition, modules on human rights topics, with both theoretical and practical components, have been introduced in the curricula of many Russian educational institutions. Since 2015, agreements have been forged with a number of law schools in the Russian Federation on cooperation with the Ombudsman, pursuant to which students undergo internships in the substantive divisions of the Ombudsman's Office, participate in study tours and attend open lectures.

242. Steps are being taken to extend the target audience of legal awareness-raising measures beyond the strictly educational domain. In 2016, a nationwide competition was launched for the design of awareness-raising and teaching initiatives in the field of law. The competition was prepared jointly by the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ombudsman, the youth chapter of the Bar Association of the Russian Federation and the Law Lecturers' Association of the Russian Federation.

243. Substantial work in the area of legal education is also being carried out by the Ombudsman system in the Russian Federation. In this undertaking, the Ombudsman has harnessed the potential of the media. Thus, in September 2015, the Russian public television network OTR launched a weekly outreach programme on human rights. In the weekly broadcasts, regional ombudsmen and specialists from the Ombudsman's Office report on efforts to uphold human rights in their regions, their projects, specialized areas and specific features of their work in the Russian Federation.

244. In 2015 a new section was added to the Ombudsman's website (http://ombudsmanrf.org), dedicated to human rights outreach. The weekly newspaper *Argumenty Nedeli* (Talking Points of the Week) includes a column entitled "Ombudsman's talking point". The column, which is designed for a general readership, explores various laws and regulations, discusses the powers of the regional ombudsmen, answers questions about the law submitted by readers and submits recommendations on legal approaches to the settlement of certain complications that arise in day-to-day life. The Ombudsman's website also contains a compilation of best practices and human rights-related outreach programmes in the regions which have been launched by the regional ombudsmen, sometimes also in cooperation with other agencies.

245. Since 2013, an interregional human rights-related education project has been run by the Russian New University in cooperation with the Russian Bar Association and the Ombudsman of the Russian Federation. The project is designed as a multi-level interactive game on a human-rights theme, called "Human rights volunteers", which aims to raise awareness among its players of the make-up of the Russian human-rights system, to develop the practice of the defence of rights, and to foster an advanced understanding of human rights law through games-based teaching methods. The project involves school and university teachers, representatives of the procuratorial authorities, the courts, law enforcement agencies, State and local government bodies, lawyers and notaries.

246. A specific focus is placed on working with representatives of the older generation, with a view to enlightening them about their rights and legal capacity. Since November 2015, the Ombudsman of the Russian Federation, together with the nationwide movement Over 50, has been conducting an annual promotional event, the Rights Marathon for Retirees, during which free consultations and workshops are organized for senior citizens to raise their awareness of their rights. Given the high level of interest among members of the target audience in this rights-related event, its programme and geographical scale are constantly expanding. The Rights Marathon for Retirees has been included by the Ministry of Education and Science in the plan of action for the implementation of the road map for the continuous education of adults in the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025.

247. The operation of civil society institutions in the Russian Federation is legally underpinned by the Constitution of 12 December 1993, Federal Act No. 82 of 19 May 1995, on voluntary associations, Federal Act No. 7 of 12 January 1996, on non-profit organizations,

Federal Act No. 10 of 12 January 1996, on trade unions and their rights and guarantees, and a number of other statutory instruments.

248. Currently, there are more than 225,000 non-profit organizations registered in the Russian Federation and their register is maintained by the Ministry of Justice. About one half of these organizations are socially oriented and their work is focused on social problems. Most of the organizations are active in the fields of education, science, culture and the arts, the intellectual development of individuals, health-care, physical culture and sport, the development of inter-ethnic cooperation, and the preservation and protection of the identity, culture, language and traditions of the peoples of the Russian Federation.

249. A system of public oversight is being vigorously developed in the Russian Federation. The legal basis for the exercise of the rights of citizens and voluntary organizations in this area is Federal Act No. 212 of 21 July 2014, on the principles of public oversight in the Russian Federation. The Act sets out the organizational and legal arrangements by which citizens can participate in monitoring the activities of public authorities and local governments and State and municipal organizations and verify, analyse and assess the statutory instruments which they issue and decisions which they adopt.

250. The entities which are the principal targets of public monitoring include the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation and the civic chambers of its constituent entities and of the municipalities, the civic councils under the various federal executive authorities, the legislative (representative) and executive bodies of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, the public oversight commissions, the public inspectorates, public monitoring groups and other organizational entities.

251. The public scrutiny of draft legislation represents an important form of monitoring by civil society. It provides a means by which citizens can become engaged in the legislative process and leads to an improvement in the quality of laws not only from a legal point of view, but also from the standpoint of their effective enforcement and in terms of meeting the expectations and needs of society.

252. Extensive use is made of coordination and consultative arrangements for interaction with civil society, which have been set in place in the President's Office and the Government of the Russian Federation, and also in federal executive bodies, the administrations of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation and local authorities. A number of advisory bodies have been set up in the President's Office, with the responsibility of keeping the President informed about the situation in certain operational areas, facilitating cooperation between the central State authorities, civil society associations and academic and other organizations and preparing proposals for the implementation of State policy in those areas. These bodies include the Ethnic Relations Council, the Council for Civil Society Development and Human Rights, the Council for the Codification and Improvement of Legislation, the Council on Relations with Religious Associations, and the Council for the Development of Local Government.

253. Federal Act No. 7 of 12 January 1996, on non-profit organizations, creates space for public authorities to provide financial, material, informational and advisory support to non-profit organizations. Much of this support is provided through grants awarded by the President of the Russian Federation to non-profit organizations involved in the development of civil society institutions and conducting socially significant projects and projects relating to the protection of human and civil rights and freedoms. In 2017, a total of 4.3 billion roubles was earmarked for such purposes in the federal budget. Programmes to support civil society institutions have also been mounted in a number of federal agencies. Work in this area is being conducted by local authorities.

254. Traditionally, a large proportion of socially oriented non-profit organizations are active in such areas as the prevention of child abandonment, support for mothers and children, efforts to improve the quality of life of older persons, the social adaptation of persons with disabilities and their families, social support and welfare, protection against emergencies, assistance for victims of natural disasters, and environmental, technological and other calamities.

255. Presidential Decree No. 491 of 30 September 2015, on the Russian Federation State prize for outstanding achievements in human rights activities and the Russian Federation State prize for outstanding achievements in charitable work, established annual State awards of 2.5 million roubles each.

III. Information on non-discrimination, equality and effective remedies

256. The equality of all citizens, irrespective of sex, race, ethnic background, language, origin, wealth, official status, place of residence, attitude to religion, beliefs, membership of voluntary associations or any social groups, constitutes one of the basic principles of the Russian legal system underpinning the standard-setting and rule-making work of State authorities at all levels, and also their enforcement practices.

257. In line with article 1 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the legislation of the Russian Federation includes provisions ensuring equality of the rights of citizens, irrespective of their social status, race, language, ethnic origin or religious affiliation. Article 19 of the Constitution safeguards the equality of human and civil rights and freedoms, regardless of race, ethnic background, language, origin, place of residence and attitude to religion, and prohibits any form of restriction of citizens' rights on the grounds of social, racial, ethnic, linguistic or religious identity. The Constitution of the Russian Federation affirms the obligation of the State to ensure rights and freedoms for all, regardless of ethnic, cultural, social, political, religious, property-related and other considerations.

258. A number of legislative statutes are specifically designed to regulate matters covered by the Constitution, including the federal acts on the principles of legislation on culture, on ethnic and cultural Autonomy, on voluntary associations, on freedom of conscience and religious associations, and on guarantees of the rights of the small indigenous minorities of the Russian Federation, along with other instruments of social policy which ensure the preservation of the culture of ethnic minorities and safeguard their languages and media outlets.

259. Laws and regulations aimed at preventing and combating incitement to racial and religious hatred and suppressing extremist activities also play an important role in countering intolerance. Several articles of the Criminal Code provide criminal liability for offences of an extremist nature (arts. 282-282.3). The indicia for more than 10 offences include the motive of political, ideological, racial, ethnic or religious hatred or enmity, or of hatred or enmity towards any social group as a criterion significantly aggravating liability.

260. Anti-discriminatory measures are included in sectoral legislation governing the protection of human rights in the areas of education, labour, health care, the courts, social protection and culture.

261. Any restriction of human rights on social, racial, ethnic, linguistic or religious grounds is prohibited. Provisions of a general nature that prohibit discrimination against persons on the grounds of their ethnic background are aligned with the human rights recognized in a particular area — the exercise of labour rights, the right to education, people's right to use their native language, the right to enjoy the benefits of culture, and others.

262. Recognizing the important role played by legal forms of protection against discrimination, the Russian Federation is considering, as a matter of priority for domestic policy, the creation and further modernization of a body of laws and regulations for the protection of the rights of ethnic minorities of the Russian Federation.

263. Efforts to improve legislation have been accompanied by political and practical measures, including the budget funding of programmes and individual activities.

264. As defined in Federal Act No. 114 of 25 July 2002, on countering extremist activities, extremist activity is understood to mean incitement to social, racial, ethnic or religious discord; the advocacy of exclusiveness or the superiority or inferiority of citizens on the grounds of their social, racial, ethnic, religious or linguistic identity or attitude to religion;

violation of the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of persons and citizens on the basis of their social, racial, ethnic, religious or linguistic identity or attitude to religion; the promotion and public display of Nazi paraphernalia or symbols, or materials that may be mistaken for Nazi paraphernalia or symbols, or the public display of paraphernalia or symbols of extremist organizations; public incitement to extremist acts or mass distribution of materials known to be extremist, or the preparation or storage of such materials for the purpose of mass dissemination; and the organization or preparation of, and incitement to, such acts, and also their financing.

265. Chapter 19 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation establishes criminal liability for the violation of citizens' constitutional rights and freedoms, including various forms of discrimination, such as breaching the equality of human and civil rights and freedoms (art. 136), refusing to provide citizens with information (art. 140), unjustified refusal to hire or dismissal of a pregnant woman or a woman with children under 3 years of age (art. 145), and violation of the right to freedom of conscience and religion (art. 148).

266. In compliance with article 2 (e) of the Convention, the Russian Federation encourages, where appropriate, integrationist multi-ethnic organizations and movements and other means of eliminating barriers between races and ethnic groups. Such activities are carried out under the umbrella of ethnic and cultural development, youth policy, education and the media through various ministries and departments.

267. The Russian Constitution forbids activities by voluntary associations whose aims or effects are calculated to incite people to social, racial, ethnic or religious strife (art. 13 (5)).